

TOINE THYS TRIO



In between projects and musical collaborations in Europe and Africa, Brussels saxophonist Toine Thys recorded his third album as a trio, 'The Optimist', in New York with some major names from Jazz and African music.



THE OPTIMIST

Desertions, snowstorms, cancelled flights, fires and calendar issues; everything seemed to go against the creation of this new album.

With unbeatable energy and optimism in the face of all the trials, Toine Thys finally managed to bring these magnificent musicians together in a New York studio to record this album.

Two great musicians with whom the saxophonist often plays are there: the Franco-Senegalese guitarist **Hervé Samb (Salif Keita, Lisa Simone, David Murray, Youssoun Dour)** on electric and acoustic guitars and the Canadian drummer **Karl Jannuska (Lee Konitz, Kenny Wheeler, Mark Turner, Baptiste Trotignon)**.

Enthusiastic and intrigued by the music and mix of personalities in this group, the American organist **Sam Yahel**, sparring partner of **Joshua Redman, Bill Frisell, Norah Jones and Maceo Parker**, joined the team and stepped into the repertoire with brio.

The trio turns on the axis provided by Thys' Hammond organ and music. The compositions, rooted in groove, are influenced by soul and African music. The playing of Hervé Samb on several of the tracks brings the music even further, either through his hypnotic accompaniment (check the acoustic guitar on the album's first track, 'Lullaby of Gounghin'), or his intoxicating solos. At times, the stronger tracks make room for some mystery and gentleness, carried by Thys' bass clarinet and the warmth of Sam Yahel's gospel feel.

Thys' compositions evoke trips in West Africa (Lullabye of Gounghin and The Optimist), late nights after the Carnival celebrations in Binche (Masks & Feathers), the loss of his friend and singer Wassyl Slipack in Ukraine (Cosmic Wassyl) or are dedicated to hotheads.



Toine Thys
tenor, soprano sax & bass clarinet

Karl Jannuska
drums & percussions

Sam Yahel
Hammond organ

Hervé Samb
acoustic & electric guitars

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SAM YAHIEL (US)

Sam Yahel is one of the world's best-known Hammond B-3 organ players in the jazz and creative music scenes. He has worked with artists such as Joshua Redman (Elastic Band), Maceo Parker, the guitarists Peter Bernstein and Bill Frisell, Norah Jones and Madeleine Peyroux, among others. His extreme versatility, with influences as diverse as Larry Young's post-bop, gospel, pop harmonies and world music, make of him a supple, highly efficient sideman that is in great demand by major players.

HERVE SAMB (SEN)

Whether it be on acoustic or electric guitar, Senegal's Hervé Samb's passion for African grooves has led him down a thousand musical paths. He has played with Meshell Ndegeocello, Salif Keita, David Murray and Oumou Sangaré.

"...Herve Samb is one of the 20th century's biggest revelations from the African continent: his feline groove (...) sums up the jazz-rock-electro-bop-acoustic traditions, mixing blues and a transfigured Africa." (Jazz magazine).

KARL JANNUSKA (CAN)

Based in Paris, this son of a pastor from Manitoba is a virtuoso and prolific drummer that has produced many albums and played with musicians such as Lee Konitz, Kenny Wheeler, Mark Turner, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Kevin Hays, David Binney, François Théberge, Rick Margitza, Baptiste Trotignon, Paolo Fresu and Pierre de Bethmann. For years already, he has been one of the keystones of the Parisian creative scene.

TOINE THYS (BE)

In addition to his own projects, (www.toinethys.com), Thys can often be found playing alongside Sidiki Camara, URBEX de Antoine Pierre, Andrew D'Angelo, Ben Monder, Reggie Washington, Afrikan Protoköl, Jozef Dumoulin, Laurent Blondiau... He seeks out musical encounters, notably with an ensemble of traditional Korean percussions (Samul Nori), a project with the Egyptian oud player Ihab Radwan, as well as the Burkina Faso griot Zouratié Koné.

In 2014, Thys founded a brass instrument school in Burkina Faso with trumpet player Laurent Blondiau that now teaches 50 students: LES VENTISTES DU FASO. Thys is also very active in the defence of musicians through www.facir.be. He plays a central role in sax and bass clarinet in Europe. He leads several projects (Toine Thys's Overseas, Rackham, Orlando), and is also in demand as a sideman.

THE OPTIMIST



Lullaby of Gounghin Gounghin is the artists' district in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso. Theatre, dance, music, street arts and crafts: not a week goes by without a festival moving into the public spaces. Listen to the Cameroonian traditional rhythm that Hervé Samb plays on the acoustic guitar

Tête Brûlée An energetic and cheerful piece for those that do not have cold feet. A “Tête brûlée” (hothead) takes risks – sometimes too many. You might find this brave, poetic, dangerous or reckless. This piece was specially composed and recorded in New York for this album.

Samurai A slow and intense groove played by a drum/organ duo, joined by the sax. For the space of a tune, slip into the armour of the traditional warriors of feudal Japan.

The Optimist A slow and intense groove played by a drum/organ duo, joined by the sax. For the space of a tune, slip into the armour of the traditional warriors of feudal Japan.

Masks and Feathers A track written after attending the Binche Carnival in Belgium - a carnival where masks and feathers become the stars for a whole week. This piece foreshadows what the celebration looks like late at night (or early next morning)...

Warthog For the duration of a track, imagine yourself in the skin of an animal being hunted by predators in the Savannah. Sneaking around carefully, and always on the lookout.

Cosmic Wassyl A homage to a dear friend, the famous opera singer Wassyl Slipack who was shot by a sniper in Donbass. He split his life between some of the biggest opera productions in France and the war to free Ukraine.

Bravo A track of self-encouragement for everyone that undertakes things and invents stuff. Why not pat your own back occasionally? BRAVO is also a nod to a jazz club in Brussels that was a good example of the vitality and creativity in a town in which the traditional and underground scenes live side by side.

Bowing #1 The only track recorded as a duo, with Toine Thys and Sam Yahel. ‘Bowing’, is how you pay respect. This is the first of a series of tracks that will have the same name.

ON TOUR

07/02: Propulse Showcase Brussels (*)

09/02: Thrill ! Festival, Edinburgh, Scotland (*)

14/02: Belgian Jazz Night, Nairobi, Kenya (*)

15/02: VIP Night, Nairobi, Kenya (*)

16/02: Workshop, Nairobi, Kenya (*)

17/02: Safaricom Festival, Nairobi, Kenya (*)

22/02: Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles, Paris // CONCERT RELEASE FRANCE

23/02: Bozar, Brussels, Belgium // CONCERT RELEASE BELGIUM

24/02: L'An Vert, Liège, Belgium

25/02: Masterclass, Conservatoire de Bruxelles

25/02: Private concert, Flawinne

26/02: Salon de Jazz, Köln, Germany // CONCERT RELEASE GERMANY

27/02: Paradox, Tilburg, NL // CONCERT RELEASE THE NETHERLANDS

28/02: Rataplan, Antwerpen, B

01/03: Cri du Port, Marseille, FR

04/05: Tournai Jazz Festival, Belgium (*)

(*) with Arno Krijger

